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SUBJECT: Ambassador Urges GOR to Publicly Respond to  
Security Incidents

REF: A. KIGALI 291

[1](#)B. KIGALI 181

This is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Ambassador met April 21 with the recently appointed Minister of Internal Security to discuss bilateral cooperation on security, human rights, and democracy. He urged the Ministry to investigate and publish its findings in response to each reported incident of alleged police harassment of journalists or seizure of newspapers. He stressed the importance of taking action, publicly communicating the GOR response, and criticizing only the content of objectionable newspaper articles and radio broadcasts rather than personally criticizing the messenger. End summary.

Human Rights Dialogue  
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[1](#)2. (U) During an April 21 courtesy call on newly appointed Ministry of Internal Security, Sheikh Mussa Fazil Harerimana, former Governor of Western Province, Ambassador expressed appreciation for the Ministry's cooperation on security and raised the topic of human rights and democracy. He explained that each year the Department is required by Congress to prepare a human rights report on each country, and that the Embassy and GOR recently commenced a dialogue to discuss human rights issues in Rwanda following the public release of the 2005 report (ref A). (Note: Ambassador provided the francophone Minister with an official French translation of the 2005 report. End note.)

[1](#)3. (U) Noting that Rwanda has many critics, Ambassador commented that this dialogue is key to our accurate understanding of the situation in Rwanda, which is often difficult to ascertain. He requested the Minister's continued support in the dialogue, especially if Internal Security Secretary General Mutaboba is selected for the UN peacekeeping position to which he has been nominated, and offered possible additional USG training assistance. (Note: In February, the FBI trained the Rwandan National Police on cybercrime investigation techniques. Embassy also provided to the National Police Commissioner the website to the FBI Virtual Academy which offers on-line police training, and sent a request to the FBI to reserve slots for Rwandan National Police in four courses offered by the academy. End note.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) Harerimana highlighted the Ministry's good relations with, and support from, the U.S., and welcomed the opportunity to further enhance cooperation on internal security. On the question of human rights, he said that the

GOR has provided a response to the USG report, as it did last year. He noted that as a result of the 1994 genocide there are many "economic refugees" -- Rwandans who left the country for economic reasons, not out of a credible, legitimate fear of persecution. He indicated that the GOR has plans to clarify the role of Local Defense Forces and to use churches and mosques for more public outreach to the community. He welcomed the opportunity to continue the human rights dialogue to clarify the GOR perspective, and welcomed further technical assistance on computer security and document fraud prevention.

#### Press Freedom

15. (SBU) Ambassador pressed the need for the GOR to not only verify each allegation but to publish the results of its actions. He cited the example of the editor of Umuco who had alleged that unidentified individuals had broken into his house one night after he had published an article critical of the GOR. Reporters Without Borders had criticized the government over the incident. Secretary General Mutaboba, however, subsequently had informed the Ambassador that an Internal Security investigation found insufficient evidence to support the allegations. Ambassador explained to Harerimana that Embassy must report what NGOs report and that, in the absence of information from the GOR, the Embassy will report the NGO view. He stressed the need for the GOR to respond with its own account to ensure that the Embassy has all the material facts at hand for a balanced, accurate report.

16. (SBU) Harerimana attributed the problem to miscommunication and agreed on the need for the GOR to both investigate reports of police abuses and to provide information. He said that the Ministry publishes a summary

of police actions in a trimester bulletin, but noted that the information is not widely disseminated. He observed that critics complain that Rwanda does not have political or press freedom without understanding the complete situation and Rwanda's history. He said that the Ministry plans to expand its public outreach through churches and mosques and to continue the dialogue with the Embassy to clarify and elaborate the GOR's response to our report.

17. (SBU) Ambassador acknowledged that the situation in Rwanda is complex but pressed the GOR to investigate each and every incident of harassment and intimidation of journalists, publish its findings, and ensure that such incidents do not recur. He also urged the GOR to have "thick skin" in the face of criticism - to accept the criticisms and, if warranted, to criticize only the content of the message itself rather than personalizing criticisms against the media by attacking the messenger. He pointed out that criticizing the messenger tends to send the wrong public message regarding the state of press freedom in Rwanda.

18. (SBU) Ambassador noted that during his initial meeting with the GOR on human rights (ref A), he had asked Amb. Sezibera, Special Presidential Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, who makes the decision to seize a newspaper edition if there is an article considered a threat to national security. Harerimana responded that there are legal procedures one must follow. The High Press Council must officially sanction seizure of any newspaper edition before authorities can take action.

#### Secret Prisons

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19. (U) When asked about the status of a commission to be set up by Parliament to investigate an NGO report on secret prisons, Harerimana stated that he had seen the report and that the Minister of Internal Affairs had stated during a

public hearing that he was not aware of any such prisons (ref B). He said that Parliament was satisfied with the results of the hearing and determined that further investigation was not warranted.

#### Trafficking in Persons

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¶10. (U) Ambassador explained that for purposes of the Congressionally-mandated annual Trafficking in Persons Report, "trafficking," as defined by the USG, includes procuring or obtaining the services of prostitutes under the age of 18 regardless of whether they have crossed the country's borders. He indicated that the Embassy had discussions with the National Police, Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Minister of Justice, and others to better understand the extent of the situation and to obtain information on law enforcement efforts, in particular information on arrest and prosecution of traffickers and a follow-up on last year's sting operation against landlords allegedly housing sex workers. (Note: Ambassador provided a copy of "The New Times" article regarding the sting operation. End note.)

¶11. (U) Harerimana responded that he would follow up on that incident. He noted that the GOR has drafted a national long-term plan for the protection of children, which will soon be finalized and implemented. He cited widespread poverty, lack of education, and the genocide, which left many children without parents, as contributing factors to current problems affecting children.

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